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AUTHOR Kok, J. C.
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ABSTRACT

The "value orientations" concept can be used to empirically investigate the differences between people and between human groups and can be of particular value to the educator. "Value Orientations" are complex principles that organize a given culture's expression of certain basic "human problems" (such as human nature, the relationship of man and nature, time, activity, and human relations). But while values exist potentially, they are not always acted upon, and a variety of solutions to certain problems are possible within a single culture. To investigate the relevance of value orientations theory to education, the value orientations of the four large cultural communities in Port Elizabeth, South Africa (Afrikaans-speaking, English-speaking, Coloureds, and Xhosa) were studied. Analysis revealed differences in value orientations between children in terms of their academic aspirations, failure or success at school, home education, parents' rural or urban origin, and parents' academic attainment. All four groups also reported encountering disharmony between home and school. The analysis suggests that the value orientations of some cultures are less well-suited to the cybernetic age. Education is the strongest agent to change value orientations, but many questions must be considered in order to resolve difficult pedagogical and ethical questions; the goals of uniformity and diversity in education, for instance, must be reconciled. (KH)

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DIVERSITY IN VALUE ORIENTATIONS: EDUCATIONAL CONSEQUENCES

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J.C. Kok, Department of Education
Rand Afrikaans University,
P.O. Box 524, Johannesburg.
2000. South Africa.

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1. VALUE ORIENTATIONS

Clyde Kluckhohn created the concept "Value Orientations". In their work, however, Florence Kluckhohn and Fred Strodtbeck gave the necessary structure and content to Value Orientations to enable it to be used profitably for empirical investigations. The structure and content have particular significance for the educationist - as will be seen further on.

In this connection, the word "value" does not refer to values (ethical values, moral values, religious values) or norms as generally used in educational terminology. It is rather the conferring of meaning or value or the granting of meaning that is meant. Or, what significance is attached to a case or relationship. The writers explain the concept as follows:

"Value orientations are complex but definitely patterned (rank-ordered) principles resulting from the transactional interplay of three analitically distinguishable elements of the evaluative process - the cognitive, the affective and the directive elements - which give order and direction to the ever-flowing stream of human acts and thoughts as these relate to the solution of 'common human problems'".[1)]

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(a) Cutline

Value orientations are based on the basic thesis that all cultural societies must find means to overcome a few simple human problems. These problems arise constantly and irrevocably out of man's living situations and in his contact with his fellowmen. It goes without saying, that the means by which the human being tries to express the solutions to his problems arising from his living situations vary considerably - from person to person, from culture to culture - but these variances are restricted to certain boundaries. Beyond these boundaries, solutions are impossible.[2] In other words, value orientations are the variety of means of expression to certain basic problems which generally prevail in a culture. This variety of means of expression is, of course, complex, but it does contain a firm discernable pattern. Based on this, distinctions can be made between people and human groups in terms of value orientations, according to Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck.[3] They continue: these solutions vary from culture to culture but varying in respect of arrangement patterns of distinguishable moments, being in itself, culturally universal.[4]

Theodore Brameld[5] uses the concept configuration synonomously with "pattern" in this respect. He defines "culture" as "a way of life, or deepseated culture patterns that are not so much known as felt, not so much capable of conscious description as naive practive . ."

It is clear, therefore that Brameld, like Kluckhohn, believes that almost all aspects of a cultural group, express the "Basic Values" typical to one cultural group as opposed to another, in various ways and degrees.

An important point at this stage is, that a variation exists in the awareness of individual persons regarding value orientations which determine their choices and behaviour. Furthermore value orientations are verbalised potentially but not always actually.

(b) Basic Assumptions

Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck assume the following thesis as a basis for their emperical design; the assumption that an order of value orientations exists. It follows therefore:

1) That a limited number of general human problems exist, which all people (all nations) at all times had to solve in some fashion;

2) That these solutions are neither unlimited nor coincidental, despite the fact that variations of solutions exist but that they are definitely changeable within the confines of possible solutions;

3) That all alternatives to all solutions are always present in all communities at all times but that they are selected differentially.

(c) Themesetting

The actual general human problems fall under the following five value orientation themes;[6)]

(1) The orientation to the Human Nature. The question reads: What is the status of the innate human nature?
(2) The orientation to the Relation from Man to Nature. The question reads: What is the relation of man to nature and natural occurrences (and the supernatural)?
(3) The orientation to Time. The question reads: What is the time-orientation in the human existence?
(4) The orientation to Activity. The question reads: What is the outline or boundary of the forms of human activities?
(5) The orientation to Human Relations. The question reads: What is the outline or boundary of the forms of man's relationship to his fellowman?

The solutions to these five orientation questions are always divided into three alternatives: two opposite extreme alternatives with a third possibility somewhere in-between. It must be stressed that each cultural community, each individual, has an order of preference in respect of the value orientation alternatives. Existence is not based on one solution alone, but one solution is usually the dominant solution and so the order of preference is established. Example:- A person cannot at all times be geared towards the future. There are moments when the past and the present also determine the judgement and direction of activities. However, such a person may be

pre-dominantly geared to the future and the present may be more important than the past. The order of preference in respect of time orientation for such a person will then be: future - present - past.

The following are the alternative solutions for the five orientation questions.

(1) Human nature Orientation

(a) The human nature is bad, sinful, fundamentally wrong - but rectifiable.

(b) The human nature is a mixture of Good and Bad. The nature is unstable, unpredictable - control is necessary but failures are understandable.

(c) The human nature is basically Good and innocent - and unimprovable.

(2) Man-Nature Orientation

(a) Subjection - Man is entirely subjected to the natural laws. Man has to obey nature everywhere and not tamper with it; the inevitable is simply accepted.

(b) There is no devision between man, nature and the supernatural. The one is an extension of the other and combined they form a unit. They exist in Harmony. Man's good fortune is dependant on his success to fit in with nature and the supernatural.

(c) Natural powers must be Controlled and harnessed in service of man. Nature must be subjected to the will of man; obstacles must be overcome.

(3) Time Orientation

(a) Past. Here the maintenance of the traditional, family tradition and customs are strongly emphasized. Little change is tolerated. Forefathers must be honoured. The past must be retained.

(b) Present. The inclination here is to concentrate chiefly on the present - everyday by itself. Little attention is paid to the past and little or no future planning takes place. There is little hope that the future will be an improvement.

(c) Future. In this case there is a strong gearing towards the future. Modernity is appraised. Changes are highly regarded. This viewpoint is rarely satisfied with the past.

(4) Activity Orientation

(a) Activities which revolve around existence, or existence activities. Activity is characterised by voluntarity and spontaneity. No tendencies to develop are discernible.

(b) Development. The development of the own self as an untarnished unit is strongly stressed. The purpose is the development or the improvement of own potential and ways of existence.

(c) Productivity. The solution is actual activity. Action is sought which will lead to the completion of something; productive results must be achieved; achievements must be attained which are measurable and can be judged. The inclination is towards deed and action.

(5) Relationship Orientation

(a) A continuing hierarchy of relationships is emphasized. The powerstructure between people must be maintained. The inferior should obey the superior. The same value order of preference as in direct descendancy is maintained.

(b) Communal relationships are preferred. Group objectives are hereby stressed. There is a strong identification with group ideals and everyone is respresentative of and responsible to the group. Group ideals are more important than those of the individual. People interact mutually on an equal basis.

(c) Individuality. Personal benefit is preferred but a responsibility towards society is nevertheless maintained. The individual's place is defined in terms of his objectives. Each seeks his own benefit without detriment to the other.

Note: No person is always able to live in conjuction with patterns expressed by a single profile of value orientation. Everyone has, as a part of his personality, formed through experience and education, an order or preference of value orientations.[7)]

II. THE EDUCATIONAL RELEVANCE OF VALUE ORIENTATIONS

It was indicated in the previous paragraph that value orientations universally exist in human societies but that the form and content is culturally unique. It is also true that a child cannot escape the value orientations of the family and environment in which he finds himself. The question arising, from an educational viewpoint, is how these value orientations influence his education, his scholastic achievements and future adulthood.

It is generally known that the child among other things, is educated by family life.[8] According to Oberholzer [9] the child is a double heir: biologically and socio-culturally. Every child is raised in a particular social cultural environment in which he meets aspects such as domestic routine, pets, the garden, the neighbourhood, social activities of the parents, the school, the church, leisure time-utilisation and infinitely more. This daily contact and association becomes a prototype of reality to the child, just as his environment is, to him, a prototype of all other environments.[10] The behaviour of the parents is regarded as an example and is copied by the child in his own manner.[11]

Parents give vent to their desires, their opinions on other people, social conditions, political and social occurrences, the situation in the world etc. They speak of these things in front of their children in various degrees of comprehensiveness with the result that the children come, not only to know

the world of people and conditions better but also to formulate their attitude towards the world. Attitudes are created, idealism and resentments take root in the mind - even though there is little evidence of this in their early years.[12)]

It is deduced that value orientations are not presented to children in educational situations on a purposeful, deliberate, explicit basis. In other words, the means of expression of the five stated value orientations the child learns, or he assimilates them by chance, or by implication or unknowingly from the association with and according to the example set by the adults in his environment - more specifically his parents in the family life situation. As shown by Brameld, value orientation patterns are not readily noticed or known - rather its presence is felt; man is incapable to describe it clearly. It is merely practised in a naive, spontaneous manner.

Teachers convey value orientation both explicitly and implicitly through the presentation of educational content. In other words, through his teaching, the teacher attaches meanings and interpretations to reality within the framework of the five value orientation themes. In almost every subject taught, one or more of these five orientations is unpretendedly and subtly revealed. The shaping of the child in this respect is rather that of the mind than that of the intellect.

III. EMPIRICAL STUDY[13)]

The conditions of value orientation in respect of the four large cultural communities in the harbour town, Port Elizabeth was investigated. Out of each of these four groups, namely Afrikaansspeaking, English speaking, Coloureds (people by mixed race with a Malayan predominance) and Xhosa (citizens of the Transkei), 30 high school teachers, 30 Std. 8 pupils and 30 parents of Std. 8 pupils were equallaterally drawn. The value orientations of 360 people were determined on this basis (30+30+30 = 90x4 = 360). Each sample group was evenly divided between the sexes. Due to the nature of the exercise, different inter- and intracultural comparasions could be made, leading to a number of findings which can be mentioned briefly.

From the analysis the following was apparent:

(a) The Value Orientations of children with a higher academic aspiration level differ from children with a lower aspiration level.

(b) The Value Orientations of children who have failed at school differ from those who have not, as yet, failed at school.

(c) The Value Orientations of children whose educational environment at home supports them to study further differ from those children whose educational evironment does not suppot them in a similar fashion.

(d) The Value Orientations of parents who have spent the first 16 years of their life in a rural area differ from parents who have spent the first 16 years of their life in an urban area.

(e) The Value Orientations of parents with a higher level of education differ from those of parents with a lower level of education.

It was also found that with none of the four cultural groups under investigation complete harmony exists between school and home. The fact that the child's own orientation neither corresponds to that of the school nor to that of his home, probably illustrates his own insecure position in this respect. The home and school are often two opposite poles and the child finds himself somewhere in between: in some respects he tends to lean towards the home and in some respects towards the school.

IV. THE CYBERNETIC AGE

My contention is that the cybernetic age was brought about also and mainly due to the development and preservation of certain value orientations over a period of many ages by certain peoples and cultures. The orientations that shaped this age to be the cybernetic one are those on the left side of the following schedule.

	SCHOOL ORIENTATIONS	IMPEDING ORIENTATIONS
HUMAN NATURE	GOOD BAD (Sinful)	BAD (Sinful)
TIME	FUTURE PRESENT-DIRECTED	PAST-DIRECTED
MAN-NATURE	CONTROL	SUBMISSIVENESS
ACTIVITY	PRODUCTIVITY DEVELOPMENT	SUBSISTENCE
RELATIONSHIPS	INDIVIDUALITY	HIERARCHY

The orientations shown on the right are considered as impeding if the cybernetic age is taken as a fact and as a norm. Peoples and nations who predominantly reveal impeding orientations today are mostly in serious trouble: economically, socially, politically, in agriculture, in health matters and in population growthrate.

What about education?

Education is the strongest agent to change value orientations. Anthropologists judge that it takes 3 to 5 generations to change impeding value orientations fully - depending on the duration, kind and quality of schooling. There are of course a number

of moral and ethical questions involved in this whole matter. E.g. on what grounds can education be allowed to influence childrens' and therefore a nations' value orientations? Is matters like faith and religion at stake or not? With whom lies the responsibility to take decisions like these?

Uniformity in education?

What is the meaning of the concept "uniformity" when the tremendous diversity in value orientations around the globe is taken into account? Students from different backgrounds often find the value orientations of the school of the cybernetic age incomprehensible and hostile to their own orientations. They are more or less forced to adopt orientations that differ from their own at home or to drop out. When uniformity in education is pursued, it is often discredited as being discrimination; when diversity is allowed, however, it is also called discrimination. Neither way it can win. I fear that Slogans don't solve problems in education - on the contrarary. If this convention could only conclude that we should not be busy with uniformity versus diversity but with the reconciliation of these two perspectives, I would consider the effort to be worthwhile.

V. CONCLUSION

Mr. Chairman, from my presentation you could gather that I have only touched the surface of a serious and profound issue. It really needs further investigation and discussion.

Thank you for your attention.

A paper presented at the First International Jerusalem Convention on Education. 19-23 December 1984 in Jerusalem, Israel.

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